



Oregon Just Transition Alliance

March 16, 2023

To: Senator Janeen Sollman, Chair and Members of the Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Re: SB 868, SB 869, SB 870 and SB 871

Chair Senator Sollman, Vice Chair Senator Finley, and Members of the Senate Committee On Energy and Environment:

My name is Joel Iboa, I live in Eugene, and I am the Executive Director of the Oregon Just Transition Alliance, a movement of communities facing environmental racism, climate change, and economic exploitation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 868, SB 869, SB 870, and SB 871. The Resilient, Efficient Buildings Package will reduce climate and air pollution, support healthy, affordable, resilient communities, and create family-wage jobs across Oregon.

Over the last three years, we have faced a worldwide pandemic, wildfires unlike anything we've seen before, and an unprecedented heat wave that took the lives of more than 100 people. This doesn't take into account air pollution, lead exposure, unsafe working conditions and other environmental risks that were already the norm. The truth is, while many of us have been affected, frontline communities, including people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, and people in rural areas, are most impacted.

In 2021, our alliance and frontline community members were successful in passing three groundbreaking bills for energy justice and community resilience. Two of these community-led policies were the Energy Affordability Act and Healthy Homes Act. Both of these bills ensure that Oregonians across the state, especially families already struggling in the economic recession, could reduce their energy costs through a low-income utility rate class. It also ensured that money reaches the most in need with essential home repairs and retrofits.

In 2022, our members came together once again and passed several policies to continue our community resilience efforts, most notably Emergency Heat Relief, which fast-tracks and funds

the installment of ductless heat pumps for Oregonians in the face of record-breaking heat waves. Our bills have worked together to help ensure all Oregonians have what they need to thrive.

In 2023, Oregon has the opportunity to ensure that Oregon families and businesses are empowered to make needed improvements to increase the resilience, efficiency, and affordability of their homes and buildings. Homes and buildings are our first line of defense against climate disasters like extreme heat and wildfire smoke. The Resilient, Efficient Buildings legislative package will be key to breaking down barriers and ensuring access to life-saving technologies like efficient heat pumps, and enable families to make important upgrades—like better-insulated doors and windows—that help maintain safe and healthy indoor air quality and temperatures.

Energy-efficient buildings are key not only to protecting health but also to improving affordability. Efficient all-electric homes and buildings can reduce costs in both construction and operation, saving families and businesses money on utility bills by reducing energy waste. NW Natural Gas, the largest fossil fuel company in Oregon, increased rates by [more than 40% in 13 months](#). Heat pumps will keep us cozy in winter with [up to 3 times lower bills](#) than other heating sources, and cool us in the summer too. When costs increase, families are forced to choose whether to heat their homes, pay their rent, or put food on the table.

As Oregon transitions to resilient, efficient buildings, it provides an opportunity to build on Oregon's existing clean energy economy by supporting local, family-wage jobs that can't be exported out of state. It's rare to have a solution that is cheaper, safer, healthier, AND better for the environment. Moving toward clean energy and away from burning methane "natural" gas is a win-win-win for Oregonians.

For all these reasons, we urge you to vote yes and support the Resilient, Efficient Buildings policy package and the many opportunities it provides. Specifically:

- **Healthy Heating and Cooling for All (SB 868)** will align our energy efficiency programs with our state climate goals, accelerate heat pump deployment, and ramp up other energy efficiency efforts like weatherizing and retrofitting existing homes;
- **Build Smart from the Start (SB 869)** will update Oregon's base building code so that all new buildings are constructed to be more efficient and resilient from the start;
- **Building Performance Standards (SB 870)** will improve the energy efficiency of large, energy-intensive commercial buildings through the adoption of a Building Performance Standard;
- **Smart State Buildings (SB 871)** will help to reduce barriers for public buildings to be made more efficient and healthier.

Together, these policies will support better health, lower costs, less pollution, and safer communities across Oregon. We respectfully urge your support on SB 868 - SB 870 and their forthcoming amendments and SB 871

Sincerely,

Joel Iboa

Executive Director

Oregon Just Transition Alliance